



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

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District Man Found Guilty of Committing Hate Crime Assault in Southeast Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON - A Superior Court jury has found a 42-year-old District of Columbia man, Anthony Wright, guilty of Bias-Related Simple Assault and Bias-Related Threats To Do Bodily Harm for an unprovoked assault on an elderly gay man in the 1200 block of Eaton Road, Southeast, on June 6, 2009, and a subsequent violent threat on the same victim and in the same location, on August 27, 2009, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Wright was found guilty on April 28, 2010, by a Superior Court jury on the two counts by a trial presided over by the Honorable Anthony C. Epstein. Because the jury found Wright committed a bias-motivated assault and a bias-motivated threat, his maximum penalty on the Assault and Threats charge is subject to a 1½ times enhancement under District of Columbia law. The maximum statutory penalty without the enhancement is 180 days' incarceration; because the jury found the crimes were motivated by bias, Wright's maximum penalty is 270 days on each count. In addition to these convictions, Wright pled guilty on April 27, 2010, in a separate case for violation of the Bail Reform Act for failing to appear for an earlier trial date on March 18, 2010. Sentencing for both cases is set for May 12, 2010.

The evidence at trial established that the victim, a 67-year-old gay man, was subject to an almost daily barrage of name calling and harassment by Wright, his neighbor, solely because of the victim's sexual orientation. This abuse went on unabated for more than two years. Wright's actions turned violent on June 6, 2009, when he, without provocation, punched the victim as he was sitting outside his apartment building, in front of his neighbors and friends. After the assault, Wright was arrested and released later that day, after signing notice to appear in Court at a later date.

Upon his release, Wright returned back to the apartment building and proclaimed to the people standing outside, including the victim, that "they don't lock you up for hitting faggots." Wright continued to harass, belittle and abuse the victim, including calling him a "faggot" every Sunday as the victim left for church. On August 27, 2009, Wright again turned violent. The

evidence at trial showed that he followed the victim into his apartment building and when alone with him, threatened to stab him. The jury found that Wright committed these acts based upon his prejudice against the victim's sexual preference.

In announcing the verdict, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the work of Metropolitan Police Officers Courtney Flash and Michael Tynes. He also praised the work of Legal Assistant Amoret Vanterpool and Paralegal Zoe Antwi. Finally, he commended the work of Assistant U.S. Attorney Lara Worm and Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Mehul Madia who prosecuted the case at trial, and former Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Marcus Meeks who helped investigate the case.

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